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Monday, 28 March 2011, 11 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Agenda item 133 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/65/691/Add.8)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/65/691/Add.8, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/65/691/Add.7, the Federated States of Micronesia has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the United Nations Charter. May I take it that the General Assembly takes due note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/65/382 and A/65/716)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on agenda item 122 and its sub-items (b) to (w) at its 63rd and 64th plenary meetings on 13 December 2010, and agreed to take up sub-item (a) of agenda item 122 separately, at a later date to be announced.

Mr. Meetarbhan (Mauritius): It is my pleasure and honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States. I wish first of all to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/716) on the review of the 2006 Declaration (A/61/630, annex) on the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union (AU). Let me also express the African Group's appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the efforts they have deployed in the implementation of that important Declaration and for undertaking the first three-year review provided for therein.

In 2005, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/1 within the framework of the World Summit, in which member States addressed the importance of meeting the special needs of Africa and agreed to the development and implementation of a ten-year plan for capacity-building with the African Union. After necessary consultations pursuant to that resolution, Mr. Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General, and Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, then Chairperson of the AU Commission, signed the Declaration entitled "Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union" in November 2006 at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Declaration provided for increased cooperation

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between the two organizations and for enhanced United Nations system-wide engagement with the AU, its regional and subregional organizations, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with a view to meeting the challenges of the African continent. The African Union fully endorsed the Declaration at the highest level and called for its full implementation.

The African Group commends the Secretary-General for undertaking the review process, and welcomes the recommendations on accelerating implementation of the ten-year capacity-building programme. While welcoming the initial focus of the ten-year capacity-building programme on peace and security, the African Group notes with appreciation the collaborative efforts of other organs of the United Nations with respect to other issues pertaining to Africa.

The African Group also wishes to underscore that, as the framework for United Nations system-wide support to capacity-building at the level of the African Union Commission and regional economic communities, the ten-year capacity-building programme also provides for cooperation in other areas of interest to African development, such as science and technology, climate change, poverty reduction, agriculture and the transformation of Africa's economy into a greener one.

At the signing of the Declaration, the then Chairperson of the AU stated that if the African Union had the capacity to undertake certain tasks on the African continent, it would unburden the United Nations. Indeed, the African Union and its regional economic communities have assumed a more prominent and proactive role in the maintenance of international peace, security and development, and intensified multifaceted cooperation with the United Nations at various levels.

The ten-year capacity-building programme therefore consolidates a mutually beneficial collaboration between the AU and the United Nations as each party draws on the comparative advantages of the other. We have no doubt that the evolving partnership will yield better results in building a more effective global coalition for international peace, security and development. To further realize that collaboration, we therefore call for enhanced information-sharing among the United Nations, the African Union and its regional economic communities, and for the allocation of adequate resources and expertise for the success of the programme.

The African Group seizes this opportunity to commend the support extended to African regional organizations by various United Nations organs, departments, offices, programmes and organizations prior to the adoption of the ten-year capacity-building programme. The African Group welcomes the steps taken by the United Nations for the integration of the ten-year capacity-building programme into the United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa in order to develop greater ownership and understanding of the capacity needs of the African Union, thus creating the necessary synergies to enhance specific actions aimed at the integration of the programme into the work of the various United Nations agencies and organs.

The African Group also welcomes the recommendations of the eleventh session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, held in Addis Ababa in November 2010, where the need to ensure real ownership of the Programme by the African Union, based on its strategic plan and its own priorities, was underscored. The African Group is pleased to note the effective integration of the NEPAD programme with the AU Commission, which should facilitate coordinating the implementation of the ten-year capacity-building programme.

The African Group calls on the General Assembly to lend its full support to the recommendations of the eleventh session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism on strengthening the capacity of the joint secretariat of the AU Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa with a view to enhancing its human and financial capabilities for more efficient support for the programme's implementation.

The African Group looks forward to the successful realization of the ten-year capacity-building programme, as it draws on the benefit of lessons learned from past experience and goes beyond past programmes, such as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The African Group further looks forward to intensified action with respect to the implementation of the programme as an evolving dynamic process that would contribute towards filling the continuing gaps in the United Nations system pertaining to African

development issues. It is indeed the Group's sincere hope that the programme will contribute towards achieving higher standards of living in Africa by providing enhanced capacity for the valorization of Africa's diverse resources and potential.

In that connection, the African Group reiterates the need for the General Assembly and all international partners to strengthen their support for the implementation of the programme and to approve adequate funding and the necessary resources that may be required by the Secretariat and other United Nations agencies, the African Union and its regional economic communities to fulfil the objectives defined by the World Summit, with a view to meeting the special needs of Africa.

Mr. Tag-Eldin (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations" (A/65/382) and "Review of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union" (A/65/716). I would also like to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Mauritius on behalf of the Group of African States.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union represents a pioneering model of true partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations on the basis of the firm foundation provided for in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which underscores the role that can be played by regional arrangements.

The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union has expanded to include the areas of peacekeeping, the peaceful settlement of disputes, mediation and electoral assistance, as well as building the institutional capacity of the African Union in various fields within the framework of implementing the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union.

In that regard, Egypt stresses the importance of mobilizing the necessary resources for the programme's implementation, in particular in the light of the review process, which affirmed the existence of shortcomings in implementing its objectives owing to a lack of funding. Recent positive developments in the situations in Guinea and the Niger are examples of the significant impact of cooperation between the two organizations and with subregional organizations in supporting peace and stability on the African continent. Moreover, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations support package for the African Union Mission in Somalia are examples of ongoing cooperation between the two organizations in the area of peacekeeping.

The meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council in July 2010 was held in the framework of the consultation mechanisms between the two bodies, as was its meeting with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). All of those meetings are emblematic of the commitment of the two organizations and their main organs to enhancing the institutional dialogue between them. Egypt stresses the need to provide maximum support to the countries on the PBC's agenda, which are all African countries emerging from conflict. This requires all of us to work on enhancing the reconstruction efforts of African countries in the framework of full respect for national ownership and with increased funding from the Peacebuilding Fund.

The delegation of Egypt welcomes the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in many areas, especially the peaceful settlement of disputes and peacekeeping. In that context, Egypt underlines the importance of deepening the existing partnership, in particular by giving more attention to cooperation in the fields of economic and social development and by strengthening international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development in the framework of the international community's commitment to supporting development efforts in Africa.

That commitment was highlighted in the final document (resolution 65/1) of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, held in September 2010. The final document emphasizes the need to address the development needs of Africa and the priority that all parties must give to fulfilling their commitments towards development in Africa. In that respect, the delegation of Egypt looks forward to the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, to be held in May 2011, as it will provide us with an important opportunity to reaffirm the commitments of the United Nations system and the international community towards the least developed countries, most of which are African.

I would also like to stress the importance of the international community's commitment to supporting Africa during the negotiations of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012; during the second comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS; and during the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, to be held in September on the sidelines of the sixty-sixth session.

Several positive steps have been taken to promote coordination between the United Nations and the African Union in the economic fields. In that regard, we would like to mention the annual meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, organized by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa. The purpose of the meeting is to contribute to the formulation of African common positions on development challenges faced by African States. We believe that addressing those challenges requires concerted international efforts in the framework of the implementation of international development commitments.

Egypt firmly believes in the importance of strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and of supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve peace, stability and development. On that basis, Egypt helps to enhancing the partnership between the two sides in the area of peacekeeping, particularly through its significant contribution to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and its support to the African Union Mission in Somalia.

In addition, in August 2010, Egypt hosted the first retreat of the special envoys of the United Nations and the African Union to Africa, which allowed for an exchange of ideas and experiences that would have a positive impact by strengthening coordination in the work of the envoys of the two organizations. Egypt will continue its support for the partnership between the two organizations to promote peace, stability and development on our African continent.

Many of the security, political and development challenges facing the African continent, as well as many recent developments on the international scene, clearly demonstrate the importance of complementarity between the universality of the United Nations and the regional approach in addressing various crises and conflicts. These elements are assuming special importance in light of the efforts being made to directly address the deeper characteristics, situations and problems in conflict or crisis areas. Egypt is hopeful that our discussions today will contribute to strengthening the existing partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, which is a key element in the success of our joint efforts to promote international peace and security and to support the development aspirations of the peoples of all Member States.

Mr. Nkombela (South Africa): It is my pleasure to address the Assembly today as part of its discussion of the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "Review of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union" (A/65/716) and "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations" (A/65/382).

South Africa also aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Mauritius on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation is committed to the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union (AU). That relationship was established under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides for regional arrangements to play a role in the maintenance of international peace and security, provided that such arrangements are consistent with the purpose and principles of the United Nations.

As we have envisioned, the effectiveness of the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, including in matters of financing and training, is a developing feature of that relationship. The effectiveness of that cooperation is also contingent on the availability of sustainable, predictable and flexible financial resources in support of peacekeeping operations in Africa.

The relationship between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council has been complementary. As the report of the Secretary-General on the ten-year capacity-building programme reminds us, the United Nations and the African Union, together with the regional economic communities, have carried out joint preventive diplomacy and

peacemaking activities for the resolution of crises throughout Africa.

The AU has benefited from its relationship with the United Nations within the framework of the peace and security cluster of the ten-year capacity-building programme. In that regard, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have provided ongoing support to the operationalization of the African Standby Force, which is one of the critical pillars of the African peace and security architecture.

The leadership of the AU has been crucial in ensuring the smooth conduct of processes to establish peace and security in Africa. We have thus strengthened our coordination with the appointment of an African Union Commission focal point for the review of the ten-year capacity-building programme. Our goal should be to see a more robust African peace and security architecture, in which the African Standby Force is able to more effectively participate.

We recall that, following the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), the Secretary-General sought to further the objectives thereof by signing the Declaration on the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union (A/61/630, annex) with the Chairperson of the AU Commission. The aim of the framework was to cover all aspects of cooperation between the two organizations, including peace and security; assistance in institution-building and in political and electoral matters; peacekeeping operations; governance, human rights and the rule of law; peacebuilding; humanitarian response, recovery and food security; social, cultural and health issues; and the environment. South Africa supports a broad approach to addressing the many challenges facing African countries through the promotion of the socio-economic development of the continent and respect for democracy, political reform, justice and human rights.

South Africa is committed to mobilizing for the renewal, advancement and development of Africa, and counts among our successes the Capacity Development Strategic Framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was endorsed by the Assembly of the African Union at its fourteenth ordinary session, and the fact that the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency is now fully integrated into the AU.

We are pleased to be supporters of the movement forward for Africa through a larger, integrated and growing regional market that will enhance industrial development and investment and provide a basis for enhanced intra-African trade. South Africa has been honoured to have been asked to help coordinate the New Partnership for Africa's Development infrastructure revitalization initiative. African infrastructure development is a key priority, and my delegation is proud to recall that the African Union has agreed on criteria for project selection and has set clear time frames and targets.

My delegation believes that we can also agree that what is needed is further support to fully realize the potential of the mutually beneficial relationship between the AU and the United Nations. The establishment of the United Nations-African Union joint task force on peace and security and the upgrading of the United Nations Office to the African Union are steps in the right direction.

The further challenge remains collectively addressing funding, equipment, logistics and long-term capacity-building, as agreed in Security Council resolution 1809 (2008). Additionally, without a well-defined programme of work for the 10-year capacity-building programme, we will delay our achievement of the collective desire to see a peaceful and prosperous African continent. We should remember that not only does Africa deserve to win the peace, but that we also deserve to keep it.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to you, Sir, for convening this thematic debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), especially coming on the heels of the substantive session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

The Nigerian delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Mauritius on behalf of the Group of Arab States and would like to highlight a few salient points on the subject.

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations effectively laid the foundation for United Nations cooperation with regional organizations. The prevailing relationship between the African Union and the United Nations is therefore based on this fact.

Conflicts in Africa consume over 70 per cent of all the resources dedicated by the United Nations to peacekeeping, while eight of the 15 United Nations operations are located in Africa, with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo absorbing more peacekeeping personnel than any other United Nations peacekeeping mission. Given the primacy and legitimacy of the Security Council's responsibility in peacekeeping operations and the limited capacity of the African Union to respond to peace and security challenges in the continent, the African Union has been building on the synergy resulting from its collaboration with the United Nations to enhance the African peace and security architecture.

As the Prodi report (A/63/666) aptly recognized, the African peace and security architecture cannot operate in isolation. The imperative of a vision shared by the United Nations and the AU when addressing issues of mutual concern needs to be underscored. In this context, the establishment of the United Nations Office to the African Union at the African Union Commission was a significant step in the building of a long-lasting relationship, particularly in supporting long-term capacity-building, which must not only transcend military deployment, but should also focus on overall capacity across a wide spectrum of activities.

For this reason, the need to develop a robust regional structure for peace and security remains a daunting challenge. It is in this regard that Nigeria calls for support of the African Union's existing peace and security architecture, including the Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force, the Special Fund and post-conflict reconstruction. We believe that the full operationalization of this architecture and sustained support for individual structures constitute the key to peace and security on the continent. For example, a robust Special Fund would enable the continent to overcome the perennial problem of sustaining peacekeeping operations. Africa would require credible, predictable, sustainable and flexible financing from assessed contributions of Members of the United Nations.

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the increasing consultations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council are proud examples of the evolving relationship between the African Union and the United Nations. But we must not rest on our oars. The Nigerian delegation asserts that the relationship between the African Union and the United Nations must also address those fundamental problems that hinder peace on the continent, particularly the issues of development that are germane to the absence of peace in Africa.

Peace and development are coterminous. The absence of one means the futility of the other. It is in this context that the African Union's evolving relationship with the United Nations must be so structured as to also involve cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Nigeria believes that sustainable peace on the African continent will be better served when the people enjoy a better life as a matter of their right.

The issue of the environment must be at the heart of the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union. The emerging threats of environmental degradation, leading to such natural catastrophes as climate change, global warming and flooding, highlight the need for sustainable action. The United Nations and the regional organizations, in particular the African Union, should be at the vanguard of such global action. In our world today, we realize that wars can be fought between nations, but that a war against nature is one that must alert us to an ever-present danger that we must, of necessity, collectively face together as the human race.

In the world of the strong, only the feeble, the weak and the vulnerable suffer. Africa continues to be the dumping ground of small arms and light weapons, as well as drugs, exacerbating the situation of insecurity within the region. Despite all expectations for a global form of action to be taken, no treaty is yet in sight. Perhaps one way that the United Nations can collaborate on this issue of serious regional, if not global, concern is to take serious steps towards the actualization of a treaty that will not only ban but track and monitor the illegal use of small arms and light weapons. Notwithstanding the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to track and monitor the illegal sale and use of small arms and light weapons, the time is ripe to introduce the instrumentality of a treaty, which will demonstrate our collective resolve to halt this regional and global menace.

Let me reiterate that a close relationship between the United Nations and the African Union will not only bolster the capacity of the African Union to confront the challenges of our times, but will also address some of our aspirations for a more prosperous, viable and peaceful world in the future.

Mrs. Bibalou (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): It is especially gratifying for me to take the floor on behalf of my country, Gabon, on agenda item 122 (a), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union", and the associated reports of the Secretary-General (A/65/382 and A/65/716). I take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General on the sterling job he has done. My delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Mauritius on behalf of the Group of African States.

I do not intend to provide an overview of all the fields in which the United Nations has contributed to capacity-building of the African Union on the basis of document A/61/630, the annex of which contains a follow-up Declaration to the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). However, I would like to make a few comments on a number of initiatives that are especially dear to my delegation.

In the course of the general debate of September 2010, the States Members of the Organization reaffirmed the role of the United Nations in global governance. Over and above the adoption in 2006 of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, the support provided by the United Nations for African Union activities, in terms of both peace and security and of economic, social, cultural, financial and human development, is part and parcel of our vision of such governance.

In this regard, my country welcomes all of the activities of the Organization and its specialized agencies in providing effective support to African Union capacity-building. Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union is not only necessary but also vital, given the leadership role of the former and the close links between the concepts of peace and security, governance and development on our continent. We must develop complementarity between the expertise of the African Union on the ground and the resources available to the United Nations and its specialized agencies, with a view to maximizing our results.

That is the approach taken by the United Nations with respect to support for peace and security in Africa, particularly through the Panel of the Wise in the field of mediation, electoral assistance, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, logistical support for the African Union Mission in Somalia, and assistance to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. That has also been the case with respect to economic, social or cultural development issues such as the promotion of the objectives of the Planning and Coordination Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development; support in the fields of education, agriculture, the environment and climate change; and the manifold actions to counter violence against women.

As regards the Central African subregion in particular, my country welcomes the opening in Libreville on 2 March of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, which will work in close collaboration with the bureau of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The opening of the Office falls within the context of prevention rather than of intervention. This structure, which is the second of its kind on the continent after the United Nations Office for West Africa, will help to consolidate peace, promote conflict prevention, fight against cross-border problems such as drug trafficking and organized crime, and prevent possible cases of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

We should stress that mediation and preventive diplomacy have always been given pride of place by my country as effective means of resolving crises. Furthermore, the adoption in 2010 of the Kinshasa Convention, a legally binding instrument for controlling small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, at the thirtieth ministerial conference of the 11 States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, also falls within the context of capacity-building both of ECCAS and the African Union. My country, which is host to the Office, thanks the United Nations for this initiative and assures it of our fullest cooperation in making it a success.

Before concluding, I should point out that, notwithstanding this strong cooperation, some inadequacies need to be redressed. Indeed, it is not so much the number but the quality of actions that matters. In this regard, the United Nations and the African Union are working to adopt a programme with

clear-cut objectives, including improved coordination between United Nations bodies and regional economic communities of the African Union, as well as the mobilization of resources.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate. The General Assembly has thus concluded the current phase of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 122.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.